

Gopal D. Das **1933-1991**

Gopal D. Das, Purdue Professor of Biological Sciences and internationally known neurobiologist, died of a heart attack on December 27, 1991.

Gopal was born in Shikarpur, Sindh, India on February 11, 1933. He graduated with distinction from St. Philomena High School in Mysore, India in 1950, and received a B.A. with honors from Mysore University in 1954. Gopal became a graduate student in Psychology at Poona University and received an M.A. first class with distinction in 1957. Gopal served as a Lecturer in Psychology at Gujarat University, Ahmedabad from 1957-1961, and came to the U.S. with a Fulbright fellowship in 1961. While a Ph.D. candidate at Boston University, Gopal became a Research Assistant, and subsequently a Research Associate, at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Gopal received his Ph.D. in Neurobiology in 1965 and spent two years as a Research Associate at the Max-Planck-Institut für Psychiatrie in Munich, Germany. Gopal returned to M.I.T. as a Lecturer in 1967 and joined the Purdue Department of Biological Sciences as an Assistant Professor in 1968. Gopal became an Associate Professor in 1971 and Professor in 1979.

The focus of Gopal's research was the technique of neural tissue transplantation. In a pioneering study published in 1971, Gopal reported the survival of transplanted neurons from donor animals in the brain of recipients. Having proven the feasibility of neural transplantation, the technique became one of the major research areas of modern neurobiological research. The hope is that transplantation of healthy brain tissue may have beneficial effects in spinal cord trauma and brain disease. Gopal's research was funded for two decades by the National Institute of Health and he was recently a recipient of the prestigious Jacob K. Javits Neuroscience Investigator Award. Among the questions that he and his graduate students sought to answer in recent years were

some of the following: What conditions promote the survival and growth of transplanted brain tissue? Does the donor brain tissue become integrated with the host's nervous system and are functional connections established? Does transplantation of neural tissue provide any enduring benefit to the traumatized nervous system of the recipient? Gopal was able to provide answers to some of these questions and his contributions are widely recognized in the field.

Gopal published two books on neural transplantation and at the time of his death was working on a third commissioned book on the same subject. He contributed over a dozen chapters to books edited by others on neural transplantation, and he and his students published numerous research papers. Gopal was sought after as a lecturer at Symposia and gave invited presentations in Germany, Sweden, Israel, France, Canada, Mexico, India, and throughout this country.

Gopal trained at Purdue 16 graduate students, many of whom have now become prominent in the field of transplantation research. Gopal's laboratory was open to undergraduate students, and 10 students working in his laboratory graduated with an honors degree. He served on many Departmental, School of Science, and University Committees. Gopal was a devoted family man. His wife, Kunda, was also his research collaborator for two decades. His daughter, Shonu, is a first-year resident at the Indiana University Medical School and his son, Ravi, will graduate this year from Purdue. Gopal is mourned by his family and will be greatly missed by his many friends and admirers here and abroad.

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